

# HIS 295-03 Contextualizing Opera: The NY Metropolitan Opera Live in HD Broadcasts

Fall Semester 2018

Tuesdays 10:00-10:50

Mears Living Room / Mears 215



## **COURSE INFORMATION**

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## **OVERVIEW**

This course is a 2-credit, 200-level variable topic research class that takes as its basic content the New York Metropolitan Opera's Live in HD series (in which roughly 8-14 operas per year are streamed live in movie theaters across the globe - including at the Harris Center on the Grinnell campus). Students choose one of the operas scheduled during the semester and research its historical context, formal characteristics, and scholarly treatment. In addition to cultivating basic historical literacy skills, students come to the class with and incorporate their own particular areas of interest and expertise. Working alone or with a small group of other students depending on enrollment, students prepare and deliver one twenty-minute, pre-broadcast lecture based upon their research and interests.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The main goals of this course are

- to cultivate research skills in a collaborative environment with faculty mentorship
- to engage critically with a range of primary sources, learning to interrogate their authorship, biases, contexts, and variably interpretable meanings
- to examine the work of modern scholars across disciplines and learn to identify their arguments, methods, conversational position, and use of evidence
- to hone skills in the clear, concise formulation of ideas with particular attention to the development of an argument and the marshaling of appropriate supporting evidence
- to support and critique fellow students' work in constructive, respectful ways
- to cultivate student skills in public presentations that both deliver scholarly content AND entertain and engage for a general audience.

## REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

This is a two-credit course that runs throughout the entire semester. Since this is likely an unfamiliar experience for all of us, here are some basic parameters. As compared to a four-credit course, 1) we meet for half the contact hours; 2) students spend half the time commitment of work outside of class; 3) all assignments cumulatively require roughly half as much labor; and 4) your grade at the end of the semester will carry half the weight of a normal four-credit course. In light of the fact that attending Saturday broadcasts is a necessary but time-consuming endeavor, we will not have common readings for discussion on Tuesdays. Instead, all of your class preparation will be connected to your research process as you prepare your pre-performance lecture.

Your grade will be assessed according to the following formula:

20%	class attendance, participation, and peer feedback of research development
20%	timely and thorough preparation of research components
20%	peer lecture feedback
40%	pre-broadcast lecture

## SCHEDULE

- 8/30 initial meeting  
MEET IN MEARS 215
- 9/6 discussion of general information learned re: operas, initial research interests  
MEET IN MEARS LIVING ROOM
- 9/13 discussion of extant historiography/scholarship, potential approach/argument  
MEET IN MEARS LIVING ROOM
- 9/20 discussion of primary sources/evidence in support of argument  
MEET IN MEARS LIVING ROOM
- 9/27 discussion of theses, lecture structures, public presentation strategies  
MEET IN MEARS LIVING ROOM
- 10/2 Emily presents draft lecture, receives peer critique  
MEET IN MEARS LIVING ROOM

## SATURDAY

### 10/6 Verdi *Aida* (1871 Cairo) EMILY

- 10/9 discussion of *Aida* and feedback for Emily  
MEET IN MEARS 215
- 10/16 Millicent presents draft lecture, receives peer critique  
MEET IN MEARS LIVING ROOM
- 10/23 FALL BREAK

**SATURDAY**

**October 27 Puccini *La Fanciulla del West* (1910 NY) MILLICENT**

- 10/30 discussion of *La Fanciulla* and feedback for Millicent  
MEET IN MEARS LIVING ROOM
- 11/6 Ahn Thu + Rachel present draft lecture, receive peer critique  
MEET IN MEARS LIVING ROOM

**SATURDAY**

**11/10 Muhly *Marnie* (2017 London) ANH THU + RACHEL**

- 11/13 discussion of *Marnie* and feedback for Anh Thu and Rachel  
MEET IN MEARS 215
- 11/20 MEET IN MEARS LIVING ROOM - topic TBA
- 11/27 MEET IN MEARS LIVING ROOM - topic TBA
- 12/4 MEET IN MEARS LIVING ROOM - topic TBA
- 12/11 Nicolette + Alec present draft lecture, receive peer critique  
MEET IN MEARS LIVING ROOM

**SATURDAY**

**12/15 Verdi *La Traviata* (1853 Venice) NICOLETTE + ALEC**

- TBA discussion of *La Traviata* and feedback for Nicolette + Alec  
LOCATION TBA